

God on Mission “LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION” – Various Passages - Sunday 12/23/18 – Gabe Palmer

Luke 1:26-38 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Luke 2:7 She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

I. Location, location, location

- A. It's the real estate agents' mantra: In a nutshell, location, location, location means homes can experience large increases or decreases in value due to nothing other than their location.
- B. When people are choosing a place to live, one of the highest priorities is location.
 1. For convenience ie. close to a place of work, near a school for their children, near their church.
 2. For prestige ie. a penthouse, a golf course, upper class neighborhood
 3. For recognition ie. mansions, palaces, estates
- C. But God doesn't chose a location to dwell in because it will bring him more convenience, prestige or recognition. He choses locations to dwell where he can transform lowly places into places of glory, honor and praise.

II. Location: A city in Galilee named Nazareth

- A. Today Nazareth is the largest city in Israel and the capital of the Northern District. It's the place to live. But it wasn't always this way.
- B. Luke calls Nazareth a 'polis', which can often be translated as city, but here describes a town (NIV) or village. It was off, though not totally

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inaccessible from the main trade routes. - (The expository Bible commentary)

- C. Nazareth is located in the north of the country at the most southerly points of the Lebanon mountain range.
- D. Judeans and Galileans had differing cultures. Northern Galilee was considered in bible times to be the equivalent of backwoods Georgia. Galileans were commonly regarded as hillbillies by Judeans. They were called, “people of the land.”
- E. A clear indication that they kept their hillbilly accent occurred when Peter later attempted to deny that he was one of the inner circle, but the people of Jerusalem could not be fooled. They said, “Surely you also are one of them, because your speech betrays you” (Matt. 26: 73). Later, those of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin characterized Peter and John as “uneducated and untrained men” (Acts 4: 13), not a complimentary remark. - Wagner, C. Peter. The Book of Acts: A Commentary (p. 29). Gospel Light. Kindle Edition.

John 1:46 Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

- F. God chose to bring the Messiah out of a hillbilly, backwoods, village. Not the sophisticated and developed city of Jerusalem. But because of Jesus, Nazareth is a place of pilgrimage, honor, and considered one of the holiest places on the planet.
- G. You may be nothing special. Feel as if others pass you by and you are pretty much as insignificant as Nazareth was. But just as Jesus was known as “Jesus of Nazareth” so you were made to make Jesus known to the world.

III. Location: An inexperienced mother and an ordinary man

- A. We would think that God would choose experienced, tried and true, parents to bring forth and raise the one who would save mankind from their sins and one day rule the world.
- B. A virgin conception is a miraculous event. But there are implications to being a virgin that are not often thought of.
 - 1. As a virgin she had no ability on her own to have a child. But the Lord chose her to do what was impossible for her to do. To have a child without her working it out in her own strength.

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2. Mary and Joseph were young and had no experience as parents. Yet God chose to honor them with stewarding the raising of the King of kings.
3. Mary didn't see herself as special or capable. When the angel greets her, she is not perplexed about the angel, she is perplexed by what the angel says about her.

“Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

4. She apparently didn't see herself as favored or that God was even with her. The angel repeats to her to not be troubled and that she is favored.
5. There was a scandal in the virgin conception that would mark Mary, Joseph and their family. We look at the virgin conception as a holy event. But Mary and her family would bear the sting of those who wouldn't believe her story. We have the privilege of living post resurrection of and accent of Jesus where we can look back and glorify such a miracle.

John 8:41 You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.”

- C. You may have a stigma put on you by others that you can't escape. But God chooses to dwell with you in that stigma. You may not believe that you are favored by God or that He is with you. But the decree over your life is that you are favored and He will never leave you. You may be inexperienced, naive and young. But God isn't worried about that, He qualifies you. You may have no ability in yourself to bring your destiny to pass, but God has created you to show creation that he can do the impossible.

IV. Location: A Manger

- A. The Worlds biggest manger display
- B. Very likely the Nativity scene we see during Christmas season is not what it looked like. (*picture of ancient Israelite home)
- C. Archeological evidence and the scarcity of wood in Palestine lend us some credence at the manger was made of mud or clay. (*picture of manger)

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- D. Jesus is laid in a manger. A feeding trough for cattle and farm animals ate leftovers, food waste, and straw
- E. Mud and clay speak of the lowly place that mankind comes from. (Genesis 2:7) God chooses to dwell in human vessels.
- F. You will find Jesus filling the void in our lives where there has been worthlessness.

Conclusion:

The mission of God is focused on the location of the human heart that see's itself as small, insignificant, backwards, nothing special, inexperienced, and nothing more than a “feeding trough” for others. Neither Nazareth, Mary, or the manger were anything special to themselves or others but because God chose to dwell in each of these locations they are forever memorialized, celebrated and seen as holy and reverent. This is your destiny. To forever be a visual aid to all creation of God's astounding grace, humility and strength.

Allow the Holy Spirit to overshadow you and give you a new birth in Jesus Christ.